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TO —

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Pioneer Comforts and

Kitchen Remedies

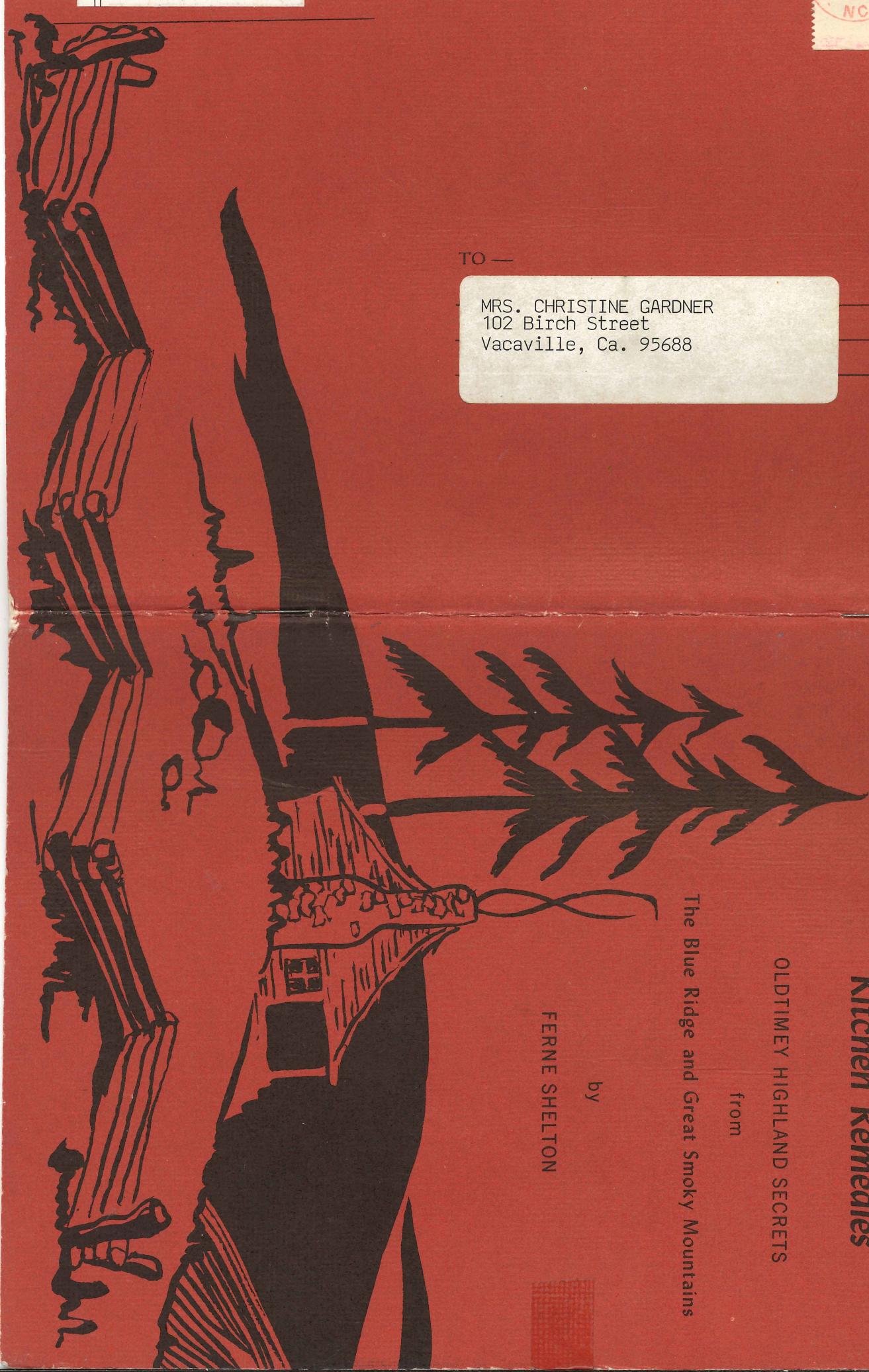
OLDTIMEY HIGHLAND SECRETS

from

The Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains

by

FERNE SHELTON



Foreword

Long before Colonists came to America, Old World medicine had been based on herbs and an underlying belief in magic and witchcraft. From the first, settlers were able to recognize and use many coastal plants. By the time Pioneers pushed inland and climbed the mountains, they found that the Appalachians offered the greatest variety of plants known to man.

With the challenging hazards of unopened trails, unknown rivers, and untamed forests as a test for his courage and strength, many a Pioneer arrived at his homesite with little more than a gun, a few tools, a broken-down horsecart, and "what he had in his head."

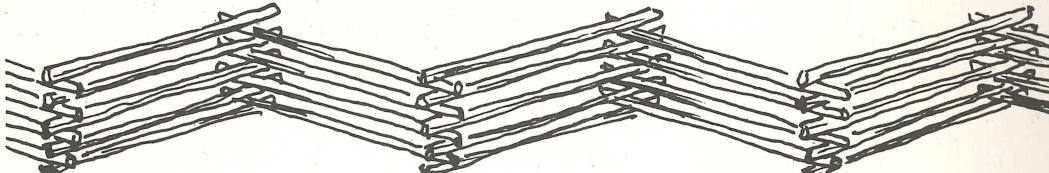
He was dependent on fields, woods, and gardens for food, medicine, and comforts. Isolated as he often was, knowing about plants and the ways of Nature meant survival or defeat, because his cry for help might have been answered only by a wolf's lonely howl.

Today, with renewed interest in Nature Study and Camping, any family packs more for a week-end trip than the average Pioneer owned; and if needed, well trained doctors are now within easy reach.

While modern medicine is another of the blessings which came during the last Century, much research is still being done on medieval herb lore. However, the old-timey remedies listed here are neither suggested nor recommended. (See your doctor for treatment.)

Rather, it is hoped this brief list will serve you as a further introduction to common plants and kindle a curiosity to learn more about them. There are hundreds of well known herbs and field plants, and many informative books available. Certain parts of many weeds and flowers may be helpful in an emergency, but others are poisonous. First, know the difference.

Then, whether Cockleburs or Catnip, look at the "worthless" plant in your yard or forest closely. Remember, at some time or other, somebody probably thought it was good for . . . well, SOMETHING!



Pioneer Comforts and Kitchen Remedies

OLDTIMEY HIGHLAND SECRETS

from

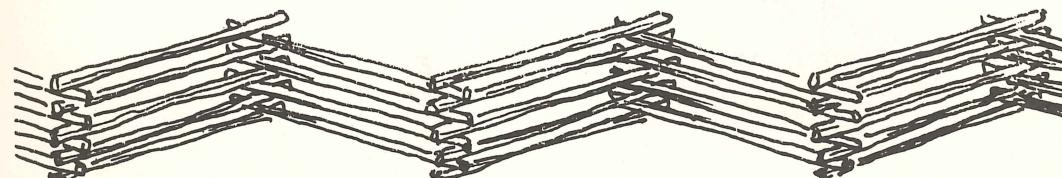
The Blue Ridge

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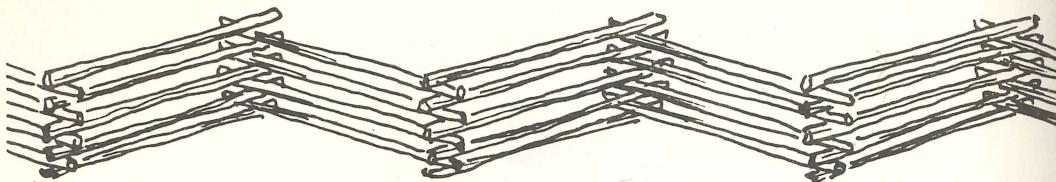
Great Smoky Mountains

by

FERNE SHELTON



HUTCRAFT
High Point, North Carolina



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Beverages and Wines



Tea and Coffee were expensive imports and scarce in every frontier settlement. However, for their warming drinks the settlers substituted many herbs from the woods. Sassafras, spice barks, tansy, catnip, dried persimmon leaves and many others were used as tea. For coffee: parched corn, acorns, peas, locust seeds and chicory root, etc.

(Herb teas are popular today in many sections. Tea experts often mix a pinch of certain herbs with Oriental Teas to add delicate, aromatic flavors.)



TO MAKE A GOOD TEA

(Never use a metal pot, for best flavor.) Use 1 teaspoon tea per cup water ("and 1 for the pot"); then pour in boiling water. Cover; let steep for 3 minutes. Then stir. Let set for another minute, then serve. (Tea is not boiled unless a strong, bitter decoction is desired.)



PLAIN MULLED CIDER (Serves about 20 noggins.)

Mix: 3 quarts cider; 1 teaspoon whole cloves; 1 whole Nutmeg; 1 stick Cinnamon and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar. Simmer 5 minutes, strain.



SWITZEL TONIC (also called "Haying Water" and "Switchell.")

Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup honey and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Cider vinegar. Stir well and keep in a jar. Add 4 teaspoons of the mixture to 1 glass water. Add spice, if desired. (Popular; often served during visits.)



PERSIMMON BEER (Persimmons are high in Vitamin C content.)

Wash 1 gallon ripe persimmons. Mash well and add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornmeal. Add 5 gallons water and 2 cups sugar. Let set until fruit rises to top (3 or 4 days). Strain, bottle and seal. (Clear, light colored, fizzy. Fill bottles $\frac{2}{3}$. . . Explosive!)

Wines were made as a common household activity, along with the jellies, jams and preserves. After proper aging (usually a year for best flavor) they were served with meals, at holiday parties and to those feeling "poorly". Well stocked pantries and cellars as advance preparation for bleak winters assured a man or woman identity as a "good provider."

RULES FOR MAKING HOMEMADE WINE: 1. Begin with good, ripe fruit. 2. Use extra care and cleanliness in handling. 3. Never use metal containers. 4. Stir once a day during fermentation.



JOY'S EASY GRAPE WINE (Using frozen or bottled juices.)

Dilute juice as per directions given for serving. To 6 quarts liquid (juice and water) add 8 cups sugar. (More if sweet taste is desired.) Add 1 package yeast. Stir well. Let ferment 2 weeks in covered crock, then strain (more than once, for clarity). Bottle. (Use same directions for other juices.)



DANDELION WINE (Considered a tonic for stomach and energy.)

Gather 1 gallon Dandelion blooms (no stems). Boil blooms with rind and juice of 4 oranges and 4 lemons in 2 gallons water for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. Let set 24 hours. Then strain, and add 8 cups sugar and 1 package yeast. Leave in a covered crock 2 weeks. Strain again and bottle.



POKEBERRY WINE (Said to be good for rheumatism.)

Gather fresh, ripe fruit only. Add water, boil and strain. To each quart of juice, add 2 cups sugar and spices for taste (if desired). Cover, let ripen for 6 months. Strain and bottle.



FRESH PEACH WINE (Also for Cherry, Apricot, Plum, etc.)

Wash a bushel of fresh, ripe peaches and mash well to extract juice. Strain through a colander into a crock. (Use pulp for marmalade.) Add 1 gallon water and let set for 2 or 3 weeks, skimming surface often as it ferments. Strain well and add 4 cups sugar. Bottle. Serve chilled.



GINGER POP: Add 3 cups sugar; 3 tablespoons ginger; 3 lemons; 1 teaspoon Cream of Tartar to 3 gallons water. Boil 10 minutes and cool. Add 1 package yeast, stir. Age 10 days. Strain and bottle.



Coughs and Colds



Pioneer cabins were often damp, windowless and built with a dirt floor. Sure to be needed before the winter ended, herbs ("yarbs") were collected and hung on the walls and rafters within easy reach. Evidently there was no "sure cure" for a cold, but the long list of remedies seem to prove that the search was on.



REMEDY USED	FOR
Mustard plaster	Bronchitis; coughs
Cooked Onions (poultice)	Bronchitis; cold
Brewed Onions and Sulphur	Bronchitis; coughs
Kerosene (on cloth) to chest	Bronchitis
Ground Ivy tea	Croup
Jimson Weed (smoked in pipe)	Asthma
Pennyroyal tea	Pneumonia
Boneset tea	Coughs; consumption
Peach tree leaves, bark (poultice)	Bronchitis
Sassafras tea	Bronchitis; tonic
Flax—tea of tops and leaves	Bronchitis
Skunk Cabbage tea	Bronchitis (Indian)
Saw Palmetto (dried berries) tea	Colds
Red Cedar—nuts, leaves, and twigs boiled	Inhaled for bronchitis
Basil tea (hot)	Bronchitis
Smooth Sumac—leaves smoked	Asthma
Wild Clover tea (of tops)	Whooping cough
Honey and Alum mixture	Sore throats; hoarseness
Mullein tea	Colds
Catnip tea	Colds; nerves, etc.
Cocklebur (leaves and root) tea	Coughs; sore throat

REMEDY USED	FOR
Goldenrod tea (leaves) ("Blue Mountain tea")	Coughs; tonic
Catnip—dry stalks and leaves smoked	Catarrh
Marigold tea	Colds
Molasses and sulphur (equal parts)	Colds; spring tonic
Flaxseed tea, honey, lemon juice, water	Whooping Cough mixture
Wild Cherry bark (tea)	Coughs; colds



GARGLES

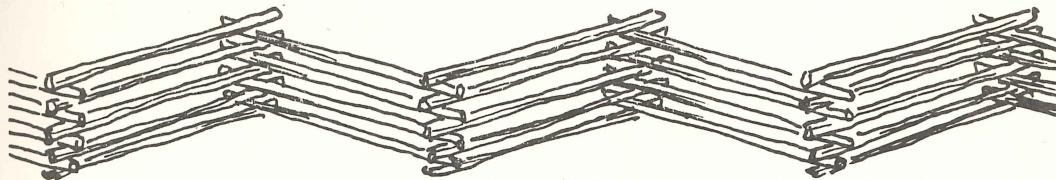
Strong sage tea (honey and vinegar added)	Coughs
Persimmon (bark and leaves boiled, strained with sage leaves added)	Sore throat; voice
Honey, vinegar, sage leaves—boiled	Sore throat
Slippery Elm tea (boiled)	Soothing throats
Catnip tea (with honey)	Soothing throats
Plain Flaxseed tea	Dry throat
Yellow Root (boiled)	Sore throat
Quince Seeds (boiled in water)	Soothing gargle; swallow
Black Cohosh root (boiled)	Sore throat
Mint and thyme (steeped in alcohol)	Mouthwash; throat
Calamus root (chewed)	To clear throat
Chamomile tea (of flower)	Sore throat
Mint tea	Mouthwash; gargle



For COUGHS, they put a hot flannel cloth to the chest, after rubbing with salves of: Camphor; Arbor-Vitae; Pines; Cedars; etc.



To "break up" a FEVER and induce perspiration, they used hot teas of: Willow tree (leaves and bark); Sage; Aspen (leaves); Dogwood (leaves and bark); Tulip tree (roots and bark) etc.



Muscular Aches and Pains

REMEDY	USED	FOR
Witch Grass ("Quack")	Tea, of roots	Rheumatism
Star Grass roots	(In Alcohol) Sip	Rheumatism
Garlic (fresh roots)	Tea	Rheumatism
Burdock (roots, seeds)	Tea	Rheumatism
Sweet Birch	Roots, bark (distilled)	Massage
Waxflower (Ratsbane)	Tea, of leaves	Rheumatism
Chicory	Tea, of leaves	Rheu; stomach
Balm of Gilead sap	Buds boiled in oil	Pain; salves
Black Birch	Sap (in salve)	Rheu; Massage
White Walnut Bark	Boiled, crushed	Apply to sore joints
Oil of Cedar	With alcohol	Massage; pain
Pine	Sap and bark-oil	Massage; stiffness
Quaking Aspen	Tea, of bark	Muscle pain
Hot salt water	Compresses/soaking	Bruises; sprains
Vinegar	Hot or cold	Massage; pain; strains
	In foot bath	Sprained ankle
Castor Oil	In alcohol (with heat)	Massage; stiff joints
Sassafras	Tea (roots and bark)	Rheu; Gen. tonic
	Oil of Sassafras	Massage; pain
Soapwort	Tea, of roots	Rheumatism; gout
	Externally	Boils; skin sores
Mud	Packs	Curing sprains (Indians)
Heat	Packs	Muscle pain

Digestive Disorders



Around 1800, the standard procedures for doctoring most illnesses were "purging, vomiting, and bleeding." George Washington's physician and others of his time prescribed the treatment freely, since little was known about germs, Anatomy, or Chemistry. In the mountains, trained doctors were scarce and mid-wives — when one was available — took care of the sick. She walked or rode horseback when called to deliver a baby or "help out" in other ways, and carried her precious bag of herbs and concoctions with her. Since "store medicine" was not easily located and midwives were not always near, every homemaker took pride in her own knowledge and collection of "yarbs."

Home methods on the frontier were fairly gentle but, from seacoast to mountain top, a tea could be brewed for nearly every illness imaginable. If it always seemed to cure . . . perhaps the imagination helped.

— ♦ —

Along with their special ceremonies, chanting, magic rituals and the 59 valuable drugs they introduced to Medical Science, the Indians also recommended the vomiting "cure" and used Scorched Holly Leaves tea, Cucumber Vine tea, Butterfly Weed tea, and Iris (leaves) tea (poison when green) to induce it.

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Settlers used Fennel tea, Peppermint tea, Ginger tea, Catnip tea, Rue tea for colic and found it helpful. Chewing the raw root of Sweet Flag (*Calamus*) was thought to cure "stomach rumbling."

— ♦ —

Many plants seem to have various uses (sometimes contradictory) depending upon whether served hot or cold, raw or dried. And without Chemistry knowledge, how did early users recognize the value of roots or bark, when the same plant's leaves might be poisonous? By trial and error, observation, trusting the healing instinct of animals as they grubbed for certain plants when seeking special help . . . and Faith.

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PLANT	USED	
Blackberry roots	Boiled tea	Checking secretions
Blackberry juice	Brandy and wine	Diarrhea
Boxwood leaves	Tea	Constipation
Chamomile (leaves)	Tea	Appetite; tonic
Iris (dried root)	Tea	Constipation
Snakeroot	Tea	Aiding digestion
Sassafras (bark and roots)	Tea	Blood tonic
Jerusalem Artichoke	Raw (eaten)	Stimulating body
Buckthorn tree	Tea, of bark	Constipation
Sweet Fern	Tea, of plant	Diarrhea
May Apple	Tea (bark, root)	Constipation
Butter and Eggs	Tea, of plant	Constipation
Hops Vine	Tea	Appetite; to quieten nerves; relieve pain
	(Pillow of dried Hops leaves)	Inducing sleep
Burdock	Tea	Purifying blood
Clematis leaves	Tea	Intestinal spasms
Indian corn	Boiled meal	Intestinal spasms
Wild Verbena	Tea	Cramps
Wine (of fruits)	With meals	Aid to digestion
Southern White Cedar	Tea	Stomach
Fig	Fruit	Laxative
Sourwood	Raw leaves	Quenching thirst
Barberry (root and bark)	Tea	Tonic; purgative
Okra	Cooked	Soothing stomach
Psyllium	Seed	Constipation
Ginseng (root)	Tea	Tonic; strength; love
Vinegar (in water)	As drink	Colic; aid to digestion
Cherry tree (bark)	Tea	Cholera
Iceland Moss (plant)	With milk	Tonic

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As laxatives, they used hot teas of: Boneset; Slippery Elm Bark; Sycamore tree bark; Holly berries; Butternut bark; etc.

For dysentery, teas were of: Wild Raspberry bark; Red Oak root bark; Geranium (whole plant) and others.

As tonics, teas of: Goldenseal root; Black Haw root; Dandelion root; St. John's Wort; Brier Hips; Curled Mint; Gentian; etc.

Sweet Flag (*Calamus*) tea, of dried roots, was used for upset stomach and as an aid. When ground or powdered, it is used for its sweet odor in sachets, etc.

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Wounds and Skin Troubles



The Indians were more successful in their treatment of wounds, and the pioneers learned from them. Adding this to her own ideas about the value of cleanliness and rest in time of sickness and injury, a good housewife could relieve much suffering.

She made (and "kept on hand") salves for skin irritations, vinegar for antiseptic purposes and muscular pains, herbs, and oils for dressings. Alcohol was used in many ways. The men (many of them latecomers from the rugged highlands of Scotland and Ireland where the making of fine whiskey was a talent bred into them) operated their own private "stills" and, no doubt, started the rumor about knowing the "sure cure" for snakebite.



REMEDY	FOR
Peach tree bark and leaves	(Poultice)
Wet Tobacco leaves	(Poultice)
Catnip tea	
Yellow Dock root (in vinegar)	Wash
Poke (root) (in salve)	
Red Alder (tea)	
Dock leaves	(Poultice)
Kerosene and turpentine	(applied)
Slippery Elm (bark and sap)	Salve
Pokeberries (dried)	(Poultice)
Wood Ashes (rubbed on)	
Hazelnut tree (powdered bark)	
Prickly Ash (chewed bark)	(Poultice)
Knot Grass (plant)	Juice applied
White Ash tree (buds)	Tea
Jimson Weed (blossom)	(Poultice)

Salves for wounds were made of: Fir Balsam pitch; Sweet Gum (roots, boiled); Irish Moss jelly; Primrose; St. John's Wort; Chickweed; Plantain; Hollyhocks; powdered Water Lily root; Calendula (flowers and leaves); Nut Gall (bark); Sour Dock; etc.

REMEDY	FOR
Alder tree (chewed bark)	(Poultice)
Hickory bark (tea)	(Applied)
Sarsaparilla bark	(Tea)
Elder (bark)	(Poultice)
Dandelion leaves	(crushed, with water)
Wild Rose stems (dried)	(Powdered)
Plantain (wet leaves)	(Poultice)
Squash Seeds	(Crushed)
Oak Tree (bark)	(Boiled tea applied)
Starch and Castor Oil paste	(Applied)
Dry Starch	(Applied)
Vinegar	(Applied)
Witch Hazel (leaves, bark boiled)	(Applied)

TO STOP BLEEDING: Witch Hazel; Wads of cobwebs in wound; Puff Ball (also for nose bleed); etc.

FOR BURNS, they applied: Strong tea (boiled, for tannic acid); diluted alcohol; Butter; Honey; salves; cold water; etc.

FOR DRESSINGS, they distilled oil from: Juniper Wood (Oil of Cade); Silver Pine; White Pine; Cedars; etc.

FOR BRUISES, they used: Vinegar; Life Everlasting leaves; Marigold (tincture); Wild Alum; Lily of the Valley roots; etc.



WARTS AND MOLES were treated by applying: Milkweed juice; Celandine (Wart weed); Castor Oil; Chigger Weed (sap); etc.

FOR FROSTBITE: Boiled Beech Tree leaves; Boiled Onion Poultice.

Bittersweet root bark made into a strong tea was applied for skin irritation, but the berries are found to be poisonous.

PLANTAIN (that hardy green weed which grows so well in most lawns) was appreciated much more when its tea was used as a tonic, (served cold); and the crushed, fresh leaves were rubbed on to relieve wounds, "breaking out" and rectal itch.

For POISON IVY: Jewel Weed (Touch-me-not) rubbed on; Sweet Fern; etc.

Miscellaneous Miseries

Daniel Boone and the hundreds of other brave settlers who climbed the mountains and lived to shoot a "ba'r" probably had little need for nerve medicine or other strengthening tonics. However, they could identify the many plant remedies they saw in the woods.

Herbs are slow-acting and milder than most drugs today, but many people are able to recognize flowers, trees and weeds for their value. Whether helpful or harmful as remedies (depend upon your doctor for treatment!) perhaps the list of familiar ills and plants below will prove interesting. At least, it should prove that the sturdy pioneers had courage when faced with any emergency.



REMEDY	USED	FOR
Ground Ivy	Tea	Kidneys; bladder trouble
Alfalfa	Tea	Anemia
Horehound (leaves)		Candy; cough syrup
Pumpkin Seed (crushed)		Worms; prostate trouble
Angelica	Tea	Nerves; gas; tonic
Spikenard roots	Tea	Backache
Wild Cherry (bark)	Tea	Measles; colds; syrups
Cranesbill (Wild Alum)	Tea, (root)	Diarrhea; sore throat
Crawley root	Tea	Fever; colic
Blue Gum Tree (oil) (in steam)	Inhaled	Lung Abscesses
Fringe tree (root bark)	Boiled (Applied)	Skin irritations
Beechwood tree (oil)	Inhaled	Asthma; coughs
Lady Slipper root	Tea	Nerves; headaches
Pine tree needles (oil)	Inhaled	Bronchitis; voice
Star Grass root	Tea	Colds; gas colic
Indian Poke (Hellebore)	Tea	Blood pressure
Pea Root (Turkey corn)	Tea	Tonic
Henbane (dried leaves)	Smoked	Nerves; hysteria
Bearberry (leaves)	Tea	Kidney trouble
Wild Ginger Root	Tea	Gas

FOR "FEMALE TROUBLE" the Indians introduced teas made of: Geranium (plant); Smooth Sumac (fruit); Black Currant; Burning Bush (Wahoo) (inner bark); Pine (inner bark); Brown Cedar (berries); Milkweed; Squaw Weed; Black Haw; Yarrow; Rock Fern; etc.

— ♦ —
The powdered bark of Myrtle (Bayberry) was sniffed for catarrh; and its berries were used in making wax candles.

— ♦ —
FOR ASTHMA, the dried leaves of Thornapple were smoked; Field Daisy (smoked); Honeysuckle (smoked) and as a tea. (Honeysuckle tea was also used for other lung trouble. Raw leaves on stings.)

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AS OTHER GARGLES, they boiled: Golden Seal (Yellow Root) (dried roots); Privet leaves; Dried Water Lily root; leaves of Motherwort; Marshmallow Root; etc.

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FOR THE HEART, tea of Lily of the Valley roots was thought mild and useful. Purple Foxglove (Digitalis).

— ♦ —
FOR THE NERVES, Pennyroyal was inhaled. Teas of: Hops (flowers); Nerve Root; Skunk Cabbage; Yarrow; Catnip; Asafetida; Blood Root; Primrose plant; St. John's Wort (tops and flowers); Tansy; etc.

OTHERS	USED	FOR
Hollyhocks (dried roots)	Tea	Bladder; kidneys
Hydrangeas (root)	Tea	Bladder stones (Indian)
Horseradish (Root)	Tea or Chewed	Stimulant; hoarseness
Fever Few (plant)	(In water or alcohol)	Tonic; colds; gas
Trailing Arbutus (tincture)	In water	Kidney; bladder disease
Cowslips (plant) (boiled)	Tea	Dropsy; lungs; bladder
Sunflower	Seeds	Prostate trouble
Linden tree (leaves)	Tea	Coughs; colds
Coltsfoot (leaves)	Tea	Colds
Heliatrope (roots)	Weak tea	Nerves; headache
Sweet Gum (bark)	Tea	Colds; cough; Stimulant
Water Lily Root	Poultice	Reducing swelling
Corn Silk	Tea	Stimulating kidneys
Watermelon Seeds	Tea	Stimulating kidneys and after childbirth
Castor oil	Applied	Rectal itch
Judas Tree (Redbud) Bark	Tea	Chills and fevers

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Virginia Creeper (Woodbine) leaves steeped in wine or alcohol were thought to relieve drunkenness and "cure drunkards."

Early Ideas about Values of Plain Foods



Many Pioneer thoughts on simple remedies came by "hearsay" and dated back as far in time as the days of Ancient Egypt. Science now agrees that some are beneficial, but many remain based on folklore and show mild, if any, curative value.

FOOD	SAID TO BE GOOD FOR
Grapes	Kidneys; to expel body poisons
Rhubarb and Prunes	Laxative
Asparagus	Stimulating kidneys
Carrots	Strong eyes; Exciting passion
Horseradish	Dropsy
Celery	Rheumatism
Lemon juice	Hot, for colds; Aid to Rheumatism and long life
Barley water	Bronchitis; Asthma; sore throat
Coffee and Tea	Stimulant to nerves
Mustard	Colds; chest congestion
Onions and Garlic	Germ killers—preventing disease and plagues
White potato	Mashed, to draw boils; Raw juice to aid gastritis
Quince Seed	Healing gargle; burns; setting hair
Honey	Sleep, Burns, Hay Fever, Cough Remedy, Nerves, Tonic
Tea	Burns; checking diarrhea
Cornstarch	Skin irritations; Powder
Soda	Gargle; Tooth cleanser; bee stings
Salt	Preserving; Sprains; Bruises
Sage	Laxative; gas; gargle; loose teeth; hair color; baldness
Yeast	General tonic
Caraway, Cloves, Dill, Ginger, Mint, etc.	Gas prevention

Herbs were considered necessary for preventing meat spoilage and preserving fats in the days before refrigeration. (Sausage, etc.) Mint, Savory, etc. always cooked with peas, beans to prevent gas and other "windy pulses." (German).

About Kitchen Spices



PEPPER was thought to cure and prevent all ills "from the toothache to the plague" and was used generously in gargles, teas, preservatives, etc.

ALMONDS were used for insomnia and stomach; relief of headaches. MUSTARD for: purifying blood; pains (poultice); footbath — colds. PARSLEY leaves for gas; stomach; coughs. POPPY SEEDS for sleep and Nerves. SAGE (see other page). BASIL for tonic and bronchitis. ROSEMARY (with milk and honey) tonic for heart and nerves. CORIANDER seeds for gas, palsy, apoplexy; CARAWAY seeds for gas, colic, cough, hiccoughs, preventing loss of hair. DILL (in wine) for love potion. SAVORY (in wine) as tonic and aid to liver. FENNEL seeds for reducing weight, tonic, strong eyes. THYME for lungs. GINGER, MACE, CLOVES, CINNAMON (all) for: gas; gums; loose teeth; tonic; heartburn; preventing diarrhea. Besides all this, NUTMEG was thought to be good for the eyes, and the brain — because (whole) it is shaped like a head!



Cosmetics and Beauty Secrets



Civilized people throughout history used dried plants and various oils as perfumes and incense. For hundreds of years this knowledge had passed from generation to generation, continent to continent, and it came to America with the earliest settlers.

In Pioneer Days, the beauty rituals of men and women were secrets, indeed. The endless search for beauty went on then, as now, and com-

pliments were seldom achieved by accident. But Pioneers were forced to depend on trees and plants for everything from tooth brushes to hair tonic.

There would also be flowers for sachets and "sweet jars", herbs for baths and skin softeners, and familiar trees for other needs. With their knowledge of plants and how-to-blend, beauty and beauty aids could be found everywhere.



The common barnyard Daisy had varied uses. As Chamomile tea (leaves) it was for tonic and nerves. (Also used in bath water for same purpose.) Poultices of dried flowers were for abscesses, toothache, etc. Flowers acted as a blond hair dye. Boiled flowers (tea) as a wash for hands and face, warded off insects in the woods.



CREAMS

Cold cream in isolated regions was lard or other animal fats, plain or perfumed. Whipping Cream was used for softening. VEG. CREAM: Irish Moss boiled, strained; Glycerin and Odor added.



ASTRINGENT

Rose Vinegar (made by steeping dried rose petals in white vinegar for 1 week) was a favorite. Also plain diluted vinegar. Strong teas (washes) of: Wild Alum root; Privet (hedge) etc.



HAIR RINSE

To make the hair shine: Rinse of diluted vinegar, or Rose vinegar. Other scents (prepared likewise) were also used.



SCENTED SKIN SOFTENERS

Rose water added to glycerin (now from drugstore) in equal proportions; Quince Seed Water; Irish Moss water; etc.



TOOTH CARE

Natural toothbrushes were made by peeling a fresh twig of Sweet Gum or Dogwood (also other trees) and chewing the end to soften. It was always soaked in water (or brandy) before using. To whiten and clean teeth: Table salt; equal parts of salt and soda; plain soda. Many different mouthwashes and gargles.



TO WHITEN SKIN AND REMOVE FRECKLES

Rubbed on skin: Raw Cucumbers; Raw Strawberries; Buttermilk; paste of oatmeal or corn meal.

FOR PIMPLES AND BLACKHEADS

Applied to face and neck: Plain or scented *vinegar*. Salves of Sweet Gum; Lily of the Valley; Dried Water Lily root; Trillium root; Wake Robin root; Snap Dragon (plant); Hollyhocks; Lobelia (leaves and seeds); Violets (plant and roots); etc.



BATHS

Wild Soapwort (Bouncing Bet) (leaves and roots) forms a lather and was thought to be a good shampoo, and washing aid.

SOAP was usually made in the backyard over an open fire by mixing water, grease and lye (collected by pouring water over wood ashes in the "Ash hopper" and catching the drippings).



FOR "AFTER-BATH" ITCH

They added a cup of vinegar to the bath water. (Also oil, for dry skin.) (The vinegar bath was thought refreshing and recommended for removing soreness after hard work and exercise, too.)



REFRESHING HERB BATH

(Many years ago, Herb Baths were advised for "keeping one looking young and refreshing the body, mind and spirit.")

Mix together: 1 cup each of: Rosemary; Dried Mint Leaves; Thyme; Comfrey Roots. Tie in a cloth bag and let boil 5 minutes. Remove bag, and pour liquid into bath water. "Then sit 15 minutes in the bath relaxing and thinking virtuous thoughts."



TO SET HAIR

Quince Seeds (fresh or dried) were boiled until water was thick. After straining, use the liquid for combing and setting hair. (Seeds were dried in sun or oven and kept for use. Liquid was also bottled and kept for ready use.)



TO GROW HAIR AND PREVENT BALDNESS

1. The scalp was rubbed with grapevine sap. 2. Castor Oil was massaged on scalp; then covered with hot, wet towels. 3. Strong Sage tea (boiled) was applied to scalp. This was also used as hair dye. 4. Water Lily Root (dried, boiled) was used on scalp.

Castor Oil was applied for prettier eyelashes and eyebrows.

TO BREAK THE TOBACCO HABIT (Smoking and chewing.)

Early Americans were advised to chew Herbs: Sassafras; Magnolia bark (especially helpful); etc.



"TO MENDETH THE STINKE OF THE MOUTH"

Breath sweetners (chewed) were: Anise seed; Orris Root; Nutmeg; Mace; Cloves; Calamus Root; etc. (Many gargles too, already listed.)



FOR TEMPORARY LARYNGITIS

Calamus (also known as Sweet Root and Sweet Flag) was chewed to clear the voice. Sage Tea gargle advised for this purpose.



TOOTHACHE

Oil of Cloves (on cotton) was put into the cavity. They chewed: Fresh leaves of Yarrow; Mistletoe; Root of Bull Nettle; Bark of Prickly Ash tree; etc.



TO RELIEVE HICCUPS ("Hickets".)

They: sipped Peppermint tea slowly; sucked a lump of sugar, flavored with a few drops of Peppermint Oil; ate Dill seeds; drank Dill seed tea; ate Fennel; etc.



TO REDUCE WEIGHT

Vinegar (in water) was taken before meals, and anytime between when hunger prevailed. Very early treatments also advised eating less and "to stop eating breads, pies and cakes in quantity." To GAIN weight, they were told to "eat well, take little exercise, sleep much, and avoid cares."



PERFUME AND SCENTMAKERS TO EXTRACT OIL AND ODORS FROM FLOWERS (Any having nice scent.)

METHOD 1: Saturate a layer of cotton (or soft cloth) with fresh Olive Oil (or odorless cooking oil) and put it in the bottom of a glass or pottery tray. Cover the wet cotton with a layer of fresh flower blooms. Add another layer of each, and another—until the tray is filled to a height of several inches. After 3 or 4 days, discard the wilted flowers and add fresh blooms, using the same cotton. Repeat this process until the cotton has absorbed a strong odor from the flowers. The cotton is then squeezed and the oil is stored in bottles.

METHOD 2: Gather petals and blooms and add them to a flat dish of rainwater. (See that the petals are entirely covered with water.) Set dish in the sun for several days, until an oily film FLOATS on top of water. (This is the true oil of the flower.) Oil is then carefully skimmed and put into bottles, used as perfume.



ROSE WATER (Cosmetic. Also used as flavoring by early cooks.)

Follow Method 2 for extracting oil from flowers. Water remaining after oil is collected is homemade ROSE WATER.



PRESERVING FLOWERS WITH SALT

Roses and other flower petals (for odor) are gathered at peak beauty. Add 1 tablespoon salt (plain, never iodized) to each half-cup of petals, and place in a fairly tight jar. (Fragrance is long lasting.)



TO MAKE SACHETS (Unusual ingredients from drug store.)

(FIXATIVES such as: Calamus root, Orris Root, Gum Benzoin, diced Lemon and Orange Peels retain odors for a prolonged time. Some fixative must be added and mixed with blooms to help retain scent in all sachets and potpourri jars.)



ROSE SACHET

Mix: 4 cups dried Rose Petals with 1 cup crushed Sandalwood and 1 tablespoon Rose Oil. Stir well, and keep in air-tight jar for 2 weeks. Then pack into dainty, porous bags and place in closets, clothes, drawers—or give to a favorite friend. (Small, decorative bags may be made from discarded hose, ribbons, jewelry, etc.)



OLD-TIMEY SPICE SACHET (put among clothes for odor; prevent insects.)

Mix: 1 cup dried rose petals; 1 cup Lavender blooms (or others); 1 Tablespoon Orris Root (ground). Add 2 teaspoons each of: Cloves; Allspice; Cinnamon; Nutmeg. Leave in a tight jar for 2 weeks, then put into small bags for distribution.

VERBENA SACHET

Mix: 1 cup chopped Lemon peels; 1 cup Orange peels; 1/2 cup Caraway Seed; 5 cups dried Verbena leaves; 1 Tablespoon Verbena Oil; 1 Tablespoon Lemon Oil. Mix well in air-tight jar. Keep 2 weeks; package.

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PIXIE'S LOVE SACHET

Mix: 1 cup Calamus Root (ground); 1/2 cup Caraway Seeds; 3 cups Lavender petals (dried); 1/2 cup Marjoram; 2 Tablespoons Cloves and 2 Tablespoons Rosemary; 1/2 cup Thyme; 1 cup dried Mint; 2 cups dried Rose Petals. Mix well, age 2 weeks, and package neatly.

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RECIPE FOR "SWEET JAR" (POTPOURRI)

Gather leaves, petals and buds of Lavender, Pinks, Verbena, Roses, Jasmine, Myrtle, Carnation, and other scented flowers. (Dry, and keep in a tight jar until ready to mix in a "Sweet Jar".)

SPICE MIXTURE: 2 cups plain salt; 1 Tablespoon Orris Root; 4 Teaspoons each of: Nutmeg, Cinnamon, Cloves, Allspice, Borax. Add 1 cup each of orange and lemon peel.

MIXING JAR — Begin with a layer of dried flowers in a large jar. Add a layer of the Spice mixture, then another layer of petals. Repeat layers of each until jar is filled. Cover tightly for 3 days, then stir. Mix frequently after jar is made, "to arouse and mingle odors."

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ROSE POT POURRI (Note difference in methods for mixing.)

Gather Rose petals. Put a 2 inch layer of petals in a glass jar and salt generously. Add another layer of petals and salt every day until the jar is full. Keep in a dark, cool place for one week. Then mix the following and add to petals: 1 Tablespoon Scented Talcum Powder; 2 Tablespoons Orris Root (from Drug Store); 1/2 Teaspoon each: Mace, Cinnamon, Cloves; 1 Teaspoon Rose Oil; 1 Tablespoon Alcohol and 1 Tablespoon cooking oil; Stir well. Pack the mixture back into jar, cover tightly and let ripen for 2 weeks. Package in small, fancy jars for use, or gift-giving.

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QUICK AIR FRESHNER (Removes cooking odors, stale smoke, etc.)

Boil 1/2 teaspoon Cloves or Cinnamon in water 10 minutes, or longer.

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SCENTED CANDLES

Melt paraffin (household) in a container. Add perfume, oils, or aromatic herbs and stir well. Take ordinary candles and dip quickly into the melted wax. Repeat 4 or 5 times, until enough scented wax coats candles. (Handle by grasping wicks with fingers for easy dipping.) Hang free to dry.

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RECIPE FOR MAKING INCENSE

Mix a few drops each (according to scent desired) of: Oil of Cloves; Oil of Cinnamon; Oil of Nutmeg; Oil of Thyme; Oil of Lavender; Oil of Aniseed; and Balm of Peru. Add all this to a Tablespoon of Amber-grease (also: vaseline or lard) and keep in a tight jar. To use, add a pinch of this to any combustible material, mix well and burn.

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(Before the time of drug stores and commercially mixed products, housewives produced Salves, Ointments, Essences, and other strange mixtures in their kitchens. Recipes — and results — varied.)

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TO MAKE ESSENCE (For flavorings, colognes, etc.)

Dissolve about 1 Tablespoon oil of the herb (or flower) in 2 cups of alcohol. Shake well.

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TO MAKE SALVES

(OLDEST METHOD) Herbs were boiled hard in water, then strained out. The water was added to hot oil, and enough resin and beeswax melted in the mixture to make a solid ointment.)

EASY MIX: In proportions of 1 Tablespoon of the herb used, to 4 Tablespoons of lard or vaseline. Heat slowly to melt; mix; cool.

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TINCTURES (For antiseptics, tonics, etc.)

Mix 1 part Herb decoction to 4 parts water and 12 parts alcohol. Age it 2 weeks, then bottle for use.

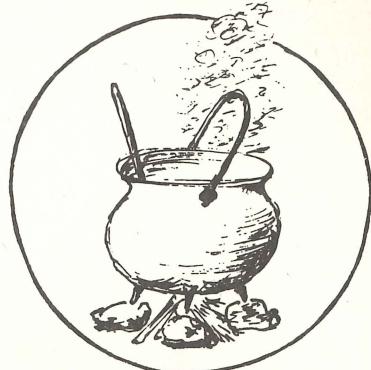
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POULTICES AND PLASTERS (Used to draw, soothe, apply heat.)

MUSTARD PLASTER Mix: 1 Tablespoon ground mustard; 3 or 4 Tablespoons Flour. Add water to make a thick paste. Spread on large cotton cloth, fold over, and apply to greased skin area. Leave on for about 10 minutes. (Skin turns pink — beware of blisters.)

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Dyeing Cloth



Plant dyes have a beauty and richness of their own. Marvelous effects are sometimes achieved by those who like to experiment, and interest is being revived in natural dyes for many reasons. Dyeing was a common practice in many early households, and found no more difficult than other necessary chores. Today, coloring with plants from your particular area can be inexpensive, creative, and often surprising. (Chemical dyes are much more permanent, however.)

GENERAL HINTS FOR DYEING WITH NATURAL COLORS

1. Plant dyes work best on wool and silk. Cotton and linen dye with slightly more difficulty.
2. Cloth must be clean and free from any grease. Wet cloth before immersing in dye pot.
3. A MORDANT binds the dye color to the cloth. Mordants such as: alum; cream of tartar; copperas; potassium dichromate; sodium hydrosulphite; etc.—must be added.
4. Copper kettles (for light colors) and iron pots (dark) used.
5. Use soft water (rain water) for best coloring effect.
6. Kettle must be large enough to keep cloth uncrowded.
7. Keep cloth under dye water — without tangles.
8. Cooking time determines intensity of color. Cloth and dye should simmer gently for 30 minutes to 2 hours.
9. Rinse cloth well after dyeing, until water is clear. Hang.
10. To prepare dye: Select twigs, bark, leaves or hulls of plant and boil hard to remove color. Strain. Use water.



Indians boiled inner and outer barks to get color. They burned Cedar Bark and added these ashes to dyes as a mordant.

Before 1800, records say urine was used by Indians and a few settlers to set dye and "make a fine lasting color."

PLANT BOILED	ADD	RESULTING DYE COLOR
Sassafras	Alum (2 Tbsp. to 1 lb. cloth)	Soft Yellow Tan
Blue Bottles (blooms)	Alum	Blue
Broomsedge	Alum	Yellow
Cocklebur	Alum	Chartreuse
Butternut	Copperas (1 Tbsp.)	Medium Brown
Pecan Hulls	Alum	Tan
Black Walnut Hulls	None*	Brown (stains wood)
White Oak Bark	None*	Chartreuse
Sourwood	Walnut Hulls	Black
Apple tree bark	Alum	Dark Yellow Tan
Madder	Alum	Red; Scarlet
Tobacco	Alum and Cream of Tartar (1 Tbsp.)	Tan
Hickory Bark	Alum	Yellow
Maple Bark	Vinegar and Cream of Tartar	Rose Tan
Cochineal	Alum	Rose; Red
Arbor Vitae	None*	Green
Onion Skins (dried)	Alum	Yellow
Smooth Sumac (stems)	None*	Yellow
Dahlia Blooms	Alum and Cream of Tartar	Yellow
Jewel Weed	Few rusty nails	Yellow
Morning Glory Blooms	Alum and Cream of Tartar	Yellow
Yellow Dock (root)	Mesquite gum	Yellow (Indians)
Zinnia blossoms	Alum and Cream of Tartar	Yellow
Alder (bark)	None*	Brown
Golden Rod	Alum	Yellow
Puccoon roots	Oak Bark	Red
Rhododendron leaves	Copperas (1 Tbsp.)	Gray
Strawberry fruit	(Rubbed on)	Red; Pink (Indians)
Marigold Blooms	Alum	Deep Yellow
Sunflower petals	Alum and Cream of Tartar	Yellow
Poke Berries	Vinegar	Red (fades)
Privet Leaves	Alum and Cream of Tartar	Yellow
Sumac Berries	Copperas	Dark Gray
Tulip tree leaves	Alum	Yellow
Indigo	Alum and Cream of Tartar	Blue
Lily of the Valley (leaves)	Alum	Yellow
(*no mordant)		

— ♦ —
To get different colors, cloth was often dyed first with one color, then another. (Purple was made by dyeing blue, then red.)

Plants as Insecticides

Pyrethrum (Painted Daisy) was used dry or burned for fumes. It is a powerful killer of such insects as: flies, fleas, moths, roaches, ants, etc.—but is harmless to higher animals and people.

LARKSPUR was used to kill household vermin. FEVERFEW, aside from its wide use as a poultice, tonic and cold remedy, was often worn or carried to keep bees at a safe distance.



OTHER PLANTS USED TO CONTROL PESTS IN THE GARDEN

CHIVES . . . set among Roses to keep aphids away.

CASTOR BEANS . . . grown to keep flies away; get rid of moles.

MINT or TOMATOES . . . grown by cabbage to keep worms away.

MARIGOLDS; NASTURTIUMS . . . grown with beans.

ONIONS . . . grown with potatoes to keep bugs away.

NASTURTIUMS; RADISHES . . . to protect squash, cucumbers, etc.

GARLIC . . . set around PEACH trees to stop bugs and worms.

MARIGOLDS . . . grown in corn patch, to decoy corn insects.

SAVORY . . . set among tulips and crocus bulbs to keep rodents away.

CRUSHED RED PEPPERS . . . sprinkled among tulips, etc. (rodents).

PLANTS AS LUCKY CHARMS (Many legends and myths were brought from the Old World.) Some superstitions advised were:

ASAFOETIDA worn on a string around the neck protects a child from many diseases. A BUCKEYE carried in the pocket protects against rheumatism. (For luck, too.)

SAMPSON SNAKE ROOT (carried) increases one's physical powers. CATNIP ROOT (carried) "to make weak men strong." ST. JOHN'S WORT (in pillows) for foretelling one's future in dreams.

TO WARD OFF EVIL SPIRITS: BLOOD ROOT (worn); FIVE FINGER GRASS (placed over the bed).

TO INSURE LOVE AND MAKE ONE MORE LOVABLE: (in bath water) ORRIS ROOT; LOVAGE ROOT; SWEET BASIL; ROSE-MARY. Indians cooked pieces of TRILLIUM ROOT in food to win the eater as a lover.

And for Certain Success in all things . . . GOOD LUCK!

More about Life in Early America

By Ferne Shelton

Mountain Cookbook

Pioneer Comforts and Kitchen Remedies

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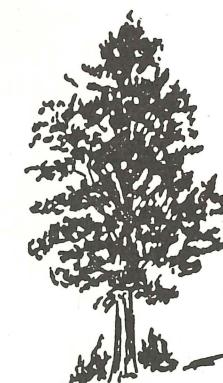
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Pioneer Comforts and Kitchen Remedies

OLDTIMEY HIGHLAND SECRETS

from

The Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains

by

FERNE SHELTON

